

Date: 03/08/2012

Telecommunications Relay Service

To Whom It May Concern:

My father is deaf and uses a videophone to communicate. I am a fluent signer, but because I am not deaf myself I am unable to get a video phone so that I can communicate to him directly. This means two things:

- 1) Tax dollars go to pay interpreters to translate for people who do not need or want the service.
- 2) I have to communicate through an interpreter, which means that things get lost in translation. Interpreters are at best 80% effective at accurately communicating a message in real time. This means communication is unnecessarily halted and filled with misunderstandings.

Even when hearing people could legally get this equipment, the few companies who were willing to sell to hearing people (Sorenson refused to sell us the equipment at all) made the price of their equipment so high that it was unaffordable for people like me to buy a phone out of pocket (some of them cost as much as \$1000). Companies prefer this strategy since they get all the money from interpreting (which is preferable to a one time payment for their equipment), but it is bad for taxpayers and it is bad for consumers. The fact that I cannot purchase this equipment is reverse discrimination based on hearing status- I cannot communicate with my father just because my ears work. Please help make it possible for people who are hearing to get video phones from all the major companies.

Sincerely,

Naomi Berlove, NIC Master, EdM, MA